VI. *Part of a Letter from Mr.* Robert Tailor, *Apothecary at* Hitchin *in* Hartfordſhire, *to* Hans Sloan, *giving Account of a great Hail-ſtorm there,* May 4*th*, 1697.

SIR,

ON *Tueſday* the 4th of *May*, 1697. about Nine of the Clock in the Morning, it began to Lighten and Thunder extreamly, ſome great Showers intervening; it continued till about two of the Clock in the Afternoon, when on a ſudden a Black Cloud aroſe S. W. of us, the Wind being E. and blew hard; then fell a ſharp Shower, with ſome Hailſtones: I ſent my Man out, and he took up ſome, which I meaſured Seven and Eight Inches about; but the extremity of the Storm fell about *Offley*, where there was unhappily a young Fellow keeping Sheep, who was killed, and one of his Eyes ſtuck out of his Head, his Body was all over black with the Bruiſes; another Perſon nearer to *Offley* eſcaped his Life, but much Bruiſed; there was in the Houſe of Sir *John Spencer*, 7000 Quarries of Glaſs broke, and there was great damage done to all the Neighbouring Houſes thereabouts; the Hail fell in ſuch vaſt quantities, and ſo great, that it tore up the Ground, ſplit great Oaks and other Trees, in great Numbers; it cut down great Fields of Rye, as with a Scyth, and has deſtroyed ſeveral Hundred Acres of Wheat, Barley, *&c.* inſomuch, that they Plough it up, and ſow it with Oats: The Tempeſt was ſuch when it fell, that in four Poles of Land, from the Hills near us, it carried away all the Staple of the Land, leaving nothing but Chalk;

the Hail broke vaſt Numbers of Pidgeons Wings, Crows, Rooks and other Birds; the Flood came down, ſpreading Four or Five Acres of Land, rowling like the Bay of *Biſcay*; and which is very ſtrange, all this fell in the compaſs of one *Engliſh* Mile. I was walking in my Garden which is very ſmall, perhaps about Thirty Yards ſquare, and before I could get out, it took me to my Knees, and was through my Houſe before I could get in, which I can modeſtly ſpeak was in the ſpace of a Minute, and went through all like a Sea, carrying all wooden things like Boats on the Water, the greateſt part of the Town being under this Misfortune; the ſurprize was ſo great, that we had ſcarce time enough to ſave our Children and Wives. The bigneſs of the Hail ſtones is almoſt incredible; And truly, were not I a Witneſs to the vaſtneſs of the Numbers and Greatneſs, I ſhould not have believed, for Number it is impoſſible, to relate ſome Hundred thouſand Cart-Loads, and I ſee them four Days after; and if the Beds of Hail had not been broke by Peoples coming, and trampling of Horſes, it might have lain till *Michaelmas.* They have been meaſured from One, to Thirteen and Fourteen Inches certain; ſome People talk largely of it, Seventeen and Eighteen Inches, but the other is certain Truth: The Figures of them are various, ſome Oval, others round, others picked, ſome flat, we were not ſo curious to weigh them. The Damage about us and in our Town, is near 4000 *l ſterl.* This is the moſt exact Account that I can give of this moſt prodigious Storm, *the like I believe was never read nor heard of.*

VII.